



Spiritual Gifts Overview

For God's plan to take place in your life, you must exercise your spiritual gifts, connected with the people in your church, for the purpose of fulfilling its God-given mission & vision.

The contents of this PDF borrow liberally from Pastor Mark Driscoll's online resource:
http://www.theresurgence.com/series/spiritual_gifts

Spiritual Gift Scriptures

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 - ⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.

1 Cor 12:28 ²⁸ Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church:
first are apostles,
second are prophets,
third are teachers,
then those who do miracles,
those who have the gift of healing,
those who can help others,
those who have the gift of leadership,
those who speak in unknown languages.

Ephesians 4 ¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Romans 12 ⁶ In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

1 Peter 4 ¹⁰ God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ¹¹ Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the

strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Spiritual Gifts – Definitions, common traits, questions to ask yourself

a. **Apostles** (1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11)

- i. Definition: There is much confusion regarding the spiritual gift of apostleship because we can get confused between The Apostles (capital A) and the church office of apostle. The Apostles refers to the men chosen by Jesus, minus Judas Iscariot, plus Matthias, Barnabas & Paul. The original Apostles were specially anointed for their time – they spread the gospel, had the authority from God to establish doctrine and the church’s beliefs, they were inspired to write Scripture, and worked incredible miracles to an extent that is no longer seen today. That authority no longer exists – and misunderstanding that has led to tremendous problems in the history of Christianity. To this day, the Roman Catholic church claims that the Pope speaks with authority identical to Scripture itself – because Popes are part of what they call the “Apostolic Succession.” No offense to the Pope, but that’s not correct.

What exists today is what you might call a “second generation” office of apostle. These apostles are gifted individuals who are affirmed and recognized by their local church and sent out on a mission to bring the gospel to unreached people and plant what we call “cross-cultural” churches. Many people today who are called “church planters” or “missionaries” are fulfilling the office of apostle – but most churches & denominations don’t refer to them as “apostles” because they don’t want to confuse people.

- ii. Traits: These people often have a number of gifts, such as evangelism, teaching, leadership, faith, and exhortation and are motivated by difficult new tasks.
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Do you have a strong desire to leave your home & roots in order to reach out to other cultures with the gospel?
 2. Does the idea of building a ministry from scratch excite you?
 3. Do you have an entrepreneurial spirit?
 4. Have you organically (not ambitiously) risen to a position of influence within your church?

b. **Prophets**, (1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11) **Prophecy/Speaking** (Romans 12:6, 1 Peter 4:11)

- i. Definition: A prophet is another office in the church – a person who has this gift should be recognized by his or her peers in the church as someone who God is raising up to fill a role of leadership & spiritual authority over the church. A prophet is able to consistently communicate biblical truth with power from God, and to communicate it in such a way that it is understood by the community, that it hits them right where they are (in other words, what he speaks is *what they need to hear*), and that results in the transformation of people’s lives. You may sometimes hear prophecy as either “foretelling” (telling the future) or “forth-telling” (powerfully speaking truth from Scripture into people’s lives).

Someone with the gift of prophecy (but not the office) is able to do the same thing, but more on an individual basis – they haven’t been called to a position of leadership & authority over the congregation. They often receive special insight or revelation from the Holy Spirit to speak biblical truth to a person or group of people that results in them being either encouraged to live for Christ or lovingly challenged to address an issue in their lives.

- ii. Traits: Someone with the gift of prophecy loves to see people grow closer to God, and they get an extra sense of fulfillment studying the Bible and applying it to their lives. They'll always seem to have a knack for saying the right thing at the right time, or saying things that are really profound.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Are you passionate about God's Word?
 2. Have you ever experienced vivid images in your mind that are biblically-based and apply to real life situations?
 3. In church or in conversations with other believers, do crystal-clear, specific words *and* scripture sometimes come to your mind, which would either encourage or lovingly challenge other believers?
- c. **Evangelists** (Eph 4:11)
- i. Definition: The gift of evangelism is the ability and desire to boldly and clearly communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ so that non-Christians can become Christians.
 - ii. Traits: Evangelists often care passionately about lost people and have a strong desire to see them meet Jesus. They feel compassion for the lost and seek to earnestly understand their questions and doubts so that they can provide a compelling answer. An evangelist often prefers being with people in the culture rather than hanging out with Christians in the church.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Do you enjoy being with non-Christians, and are you able to effectively communicate the gospel to them in a language they can understand?
 2. Does a person's conversion bring you profound joy?
 3. Do you feel frustrated when you haven't shared your faith for a while?
 4. Do you find it easy to direct a conversation toward the topic of Jesus Christ?
- d. **Teachers** (1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11, Romans 12:7)
- i. Definition: The gift of teaching is the God-given ability to understand and communicate biblical truth in a clear and relevant manner so that there is understanding and application.
 - ii. Traits: Learning, researching, communicating, and illustrating truth are qualities that an individual will manifest when exercising the gift of teaching. These people enjoy studying and learning new information, and find great joy in sharing it with others. The format of teaching varies from one-on-one discipleship to formal classes, informal Bible studies, large groups, and preaching, which is a form of teaching.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Are you reasonably comfortable with public speaking?
 2. Do you enjoy studying and researching?
 3. Do you enjoy imparting biblical truth to others?
 4. When you talk about Scripture, do people "get it"?
 5. When you see someone confused in their understanding of the Bible do you feel a responsibility to speak to them about it?
- e. **Pastors** (Eph 4:11)
- i. Definition: In one sense, the office of the pastor is the office reserved for those men who meet the biblical criteria (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). In another sense, there is a pastoral gift also commonly known as shepherding or biblical counseling that God gives to people in the church beyond the pastors/elders. These people protect, guide, counsel, and disciple other people.
 - ii. Traits: The person with a pastoral gifting has a love for people that compels them to meet with people to care for them and guide them with biblical instruction. People with this gift find great joy in seeing people mature in their faith, helping people live out God's will in their life, and seeing people come to know Jesus as their savior.

iii. Ask Yourself:

1. Do you have a genuine love for people?
2. Do you enjoy listening to people share their life story and sharing yours?
3. Are you able to lovingly & tactfully talk with someone about sin in their life so that they are helped & led to restoration?
4. Do you enjoy helping people mature in their faith?
5. Do people come to you for advice or counsel?

f. **Miracles** (1 Cor 12:10, 28)

- i. Definition: The gift of miracles is the ability to call on God to do supernatural acts that reveal his power. People with the gift of miracles see God show up in extraordinary ways, from daily little events to major public displays. Examples from the Bible include demons being cast out of people, nature obeying God's authority, and the dead being raised. Obviously, these sorts of things are uncommon and do not happen regularly—otherwise they would not be viewed as miraculous. People with this gift do not chase signs and wonders, but they do expect signs and wonders to follow God's people who follow Jesus.

Miracles most often occur in cultures/settings where the Gospel is being introduced for the first time. In the New Testament, God uses miracles to verify/authenticate the truth of who Christ is – when the gospel is first introduced, He accompanies it with *spectacular authentication*.

1. **Hebrews 2:3b-4** (NIV) This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
- ii. As the gospel message takes hold, and people begin to follow Christ, God appears to prefer accompanying the gospel with the *intimate authentication* – the transformation of the life of someone known to an unbeliever.
 1. **2 Cor 4:7** We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

g. **Healing** (1 Cor 12:10, 28)

- i. Definition: The gift of healing is the ability to call on God to heal the sick through supernatural means for the purpose of revealing God.
- ii. Traits: Those with the gift of healing trust that God can heal the sick and pray in faith for the physical restoration of those in need. These people see healing as a sign that God uses to reveal his power to people so that many will come to believe in Jesus. People with this gift do not see someone healed every time they ask God to heal someone, but they are not discouraged. A person with this gift will also usually have a desire to learn the skills and science of medicine & value bringing healing through natural means.

iii. Ask Yourself:

1. Do you have a deep compassion for people who are sick?
2. Do you have a deep conviction that God can heal anyone he chooses?
3. When God heals someone, are you excited because it helps to reveal his power to others?
4. Do you long for the coming of God's kingdom, when there will be an end to all sickness since sin and its effects will be no more?

h. **Tongues [unknown languages]** (1 Cor 12:10, 28)

- i. This gift has been a huge source of contention throughout the history of the church. It's been controversial because many people would say that it's not valid & that it's

ceased, and there are others who would say that if you walk into a church and no one is speaking in tongues, well then that church doesn't have the Holy Spirit. There are even people who think that you are not actually *saved* unless you speak in tongues. Both of those extremes are incorrect.

- ii. Definition: Ability to praise God, through prayer, in an intelligible, earthly language that is unknown to the speaker.

A person with the gift of tongues doesn't blabber in unintelligible syllables, and they're not speaking the language the angels speak in Heaven. It's speaking a language that is currently spoken on earth. The miraculous part of it is: you never learned the language! The Bible tells us that this gift should be exercised as a "sign to unbelievers" – so most likely when this gift is exercised at church, unbelievers should be present whose native language is the tongue that's being spoken. If you're speaking in a language that is nonsense to an unbeliever, it wouldn't be that much of a sign (or they might think it's a sign that you're crazy!) but if an unbeliever hears you praising God in their own native language, that should get their attention! So if you don't see this gift exercise in church, it doesn't necessarily mean that we are anti-tongues or that there isn't anyone in the church with that gift. It might simply mean that for whatever reason, God hasn't ordained that the tongues gift should be exercised at that time.

i. **Interpretation of tongues** (1 Cor 12:10)

- i. Definition: The God-given ability to hear a message spoken in a foreign language (that may be unknown to the interpreter) and translate it to all who are present.

The gift of interpretation accompanies the gift of tongues, so that when someone stands up in church and speaks in a foreign language that they don't know, someone with the gift of interpretation is able to interpret what is being said, even though it's spoken in a language that the interpreter doesn't know. So on one hand, the miracle of the gift is in speaking, and on the other hand the miracle is in hearing and understanding. Scripture warns us that we shouldn't be speaking in tongues in church unless there is an interpreter who is available.

And hidden in that give & take between two people with two different gifts is a very important point. As I've been emphasizing every week: we need to be seriously plugged in to our church. We need to know the people in our church, and they need to know us. See, how can anyone know what gifts people have, if we don't know them? Someone with the gift of tongues who wants to obey God's command would only know they're free to speak if they knew an interpreter was there. But how would they know that if they don't know the community and the people in it? In order to have the people in our church exercising our gifts properly and in the way that will most glorify God, it requires that we know one another – pretty intimately! It requires that we be plugged in so that each of us knows what gifts we have, and knows what gifts the people around us have.

j. **Helps/service** (1 Cor 12:28, 1 Peter 4:11, Romans 12:7)

- i. Definition: The gift of helps/service is the ability to joyfully work alongside another and help that person complete the task God has given them. People with this gift generally prefer to work behind the scenes. They also tend to find joy in helping alleviate the burdens and responsibilities of others. This gift is usually accompanied with an attitude of humility and sacrifice, as well as an ability to perceive the needs of others.
- ii. Traits: These people tend to demonstrate a servant attitude, loyalty, attention to detail, and responsiveness to the initiatives of others. They function well in positions of detail and assistant leadership.
- iii. Ask Yourself:

1. Do you enjoy helping others become more effective in their work?
2. Do you prefer to work behind the scenes?
3. Are you more comfortable supporting than leading?
4. When you hear of someone with needs, do you offer your services if possible?
5. When someone asks for your help, do you have difficulty saying no?

k. **Leadership** (1 Cor 12:28, Romans 12:8)

- i. Definition: The spiritual gift of leadership is found in people who have a clear, significant vision from God and are able to communicate it publicly or privately in such a way that they influence others to pursue that vision.
- ii. Traits: These people tend to gravitate toward the "point position" in a ministry. Others tend to have trust and confidence in their abilities. They best serve others by leading them, and they best lead others by serving them.
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Do others consider you to be trustworthy?
 2. Are you comfortable with being the one with the overall responsibility for the direction and success of a group or organization?
 3. When a difficult situation arises, do others look to you for input and leadership?
 4. Do you usually take leadership in a group where none exists?
 5. Do you find leadership enjoyable rather than frustrating and difficult?

l. **Administration** (1 Cor 12:28)

- i. Definition: The gift of administration is the God-given ability to give direction and make decisions on behalf of others that result in efficient operation and accomplishment of goals. Administration includes the ability to organize people, things, information, finances, etc. Often the mark of an administrator is the ability to accomplish things in a "fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40).
- ii. Traits: Administrators often have a keen eye for detail. They may also possess the natural talents of organization, observing and using details, problem solving, and reasoning.
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. When things are poorly organized do you get frustrated and want to help fix things?
 2. Can you bring order out of chaos?
 3. Do you naturally organize your life, schedule, finances, priorities, etc.?
 4. Do you become energized working on tasks and projects?
 5. Do things like efficiency and promptness matter more to you than most people?

m. **Wisdom** (1 Cor 12:7)

- i. Definition: The gift of wisdom is the ability to have insight into people and situations, combined with an understanding of what to do and how to do it. It is the ability to not only see, but also apply the principles of God's Word to the practical matters of life by the "Spirit of wisdom" (Eph. 1:17).
- ii. Traits: These people often have an ability to synthesize biblical truth and apply it to people's lives so that they make good choices and avoid foolish mistakes.
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. When studying God's Word, do you find that you discover the meaning and its implications before others do?
 2. Are you able to apply biblical truth in a practical way to help counsel others to make good life choices?
 3. Do you get frustrated when people make decisions that damage their quality of life, because you see what the better choice would have been?

4. Do you find that when people follow your advice, it helps them in their situations?

n. **Knowledge** (1 Cor 12:7)

- i. Definition: The word of knowledge is the ability to research, remember, and make effective use of a variety of information on a number of diverse subjects. It does NOT appear to be “magically knowing something.” It appears to be the supernatural ability to recall & apply knowledge you have – especially knowledge of God’s word – to a particular real-life situation.

We say, the gift of the “word of knowledge,” and that’s really better understood to be “knowledge’s word” - knowledge is the owner or the source of the word. In other words, it is the fact that the person has knowledge to begin with that empowers them to speak. It’s not that you magically know something. I can’t walk up to you and say, “well you have the gift of knowledge, So what’s the average airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow” and you’ve magically know the answer. No - what it is is that you have the Holy Spirit empowering you to be able to soak up knowledge like a sponge – especially biblical knowledge - and then to be able to recall it and apply it to situations in the real world. When someone’s going through a tough situation, you have the ability to give them a Scriptural passage that applies to their situation & that helps them to see what the Bible says about what they’re going through.

- ii. Traits: These people love to study, love to learn, and are not content with a surface-level knowledge of topics. People with this spiritual gift love God with all their mind (Mark 12:29-30).
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Do you love to study?
 2. Do you have a good memory that retains and compiles lots of information?
 3. Have others frequently pointed out your ability to know and understand God's Word?
 4. In studying God's Word, have you found that new insights and understanding of difficult subjects come easy to you?
 5. Are you frustrated when you hear bad teaching from someone who has not done their homework?

o. **Faith** (1 Cor 12:9)

- i. Definition: The gift of faith is the ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it even though it seems impossible to most people.
- ii. Traits: Those with the gift of faith trust God in difficult, even impossible situations when others are ready to give up. These people are often visionaries who dream big dreams, pray big prayers, and attempt big things for Jesus. These people tend to be optimistic, hopeful, & persevering.
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Do you view obstacles as opportunities and trust God for the impossible?
 2. Do you find yourself frequently boasting about the power of God and what you have seen him do?
 3. Do you get motivated by new ministries?
 4. Do you find yourself feeling opposed to anyone who expresses that something cannot be done or accomplished?
 5. Do you take the power of prayer seriously, or have you experienced answers to prayers that were impossible from the human point of view?

p. **Giving** (Romans 12:8)

- i. Definition: The gift of giving is the ability to give money and other forms of wealth joyfully, wisely, and generously to meet the needs of others and help support ministries.
 - ii. Traits: People with this gift genuinely view their money, talents, and time as entrusted to them by God, and not their own. They are often moved to meet the physical needs of others. They enjoy giving of themselves and what they have.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 - 1. Do you tend to see the needs of others more than other people do?
 - 2. Do you feel it's a privilege to give your time, talent, or finances to support God's work or to meet someone's need?
 - 3. Do you give to the church regularly, cheerfully, and sacrificially?
 - 4. Do you often hear people commenting that you are a generous person?

- q. **Discernment** (1 Cor 12:10)
 - i. Definition: The spiritual gift of discernment is the ability to quickly perceive whether such things as people, events, or beliefs are from God or not.
 - ii. Traits: People with the gift of discernment are able to "read" people very well, and have an innate ability to sense when a person does not have God-honoring intentions. They are quick to identify false teachings or behaviors, and can often "feel" it when something is wrong.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 - 1. Does anything get past you?
 - 2. Do you often make a quick evaluation of someone or something that was said, that others did not see but yet proved to be correct?
 - 3. Do you have a solid understanding of the fundamental truths of Scripture and a sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit?
 - 4. Can you read a book or hear a teacher and almost immediately uncover any false teaching?

- r. **Encouragement** (1 Cor 12:8)
 - i. Definition: The gift of encouragement involves motivating, encouraging, and consoling others so they mature in their walk with Jesus.
 - ii. Traits: Christians with this gift have an unusual sensitivity for and are attracted to those who are discouraged or struggling. As a result, people tend to pursue them for healing words, gracious truth, and compassionate counsel. These people also tend to have a high degree of patience and optimism. They may have a knack for one-on-one relationships and prefer working with an individual or small group.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 - 1. Do you enjoy walking with someone through difficulties?
 - 2. Are you attracted to those who are hurting and needy?
 - 3. Are you patient with people?
 - 4. Would you rather speak personally with someone about their problems rather than send them to someone else for help?

- s. **Showing Kindness [mercy]** (1 Cor 12:8)
 - i. Definition: The gift of mercy is the capacity to feel and express unusual compassion and sympathy for those in difficult or crisis situations and provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through tough times.
 - ii. Traits: They have the ability to "walk in another's shoes" and to feel the pain and burdens they carry. They desire to make a difference in the lives of hurting people without being judgmental.
 - iii. Ask Yourself:
 - 1. Do you find yourself being drawn to people who are needy, hurting, sick, disabled, or elderly?

2. Do you sense a great deal of compassion for people having personal and emotional problems?
3. Do you find yourself responding to people more out of compassion than judgment?

t. **Hospitality** (Romans 12:13)

- i. Definition: The spiritual gift of hospitality is the ability to welcome strangers and entertain guests, often in your home, with great joy and kindness so that they become friends.

This gift is widely accepted as valid, though it's never explicitly mentioned as a spiritual gift. It may be a manifestation of the gift of helps, rather than a distinct gift.

- ii. Traits: These people tend to have an "open home" where others are welcome to visit. This gift is often combined with the natural talents of interior design, cooking, and event planning.
- iii. Ask Yourself:
 1. Do you enjoy having people in your home?
 2. Do you enjoy watching people meet and have fun at parties and events you helped to plan and host?
 3. Is your home the kind that most people feel comfortable in and drop by to visit unannounced?
 4. Do you consider your home as a place of ministry?

The goal: a team/community approach to worship – each person playing their God-given role and serving one another... for building up one another, reaching out to unbelievers, and the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 14:26 Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.